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UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 000162

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE, SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PHUM IR IC

SUBJECT: ICELAND/HUMAN RIGHTS: SKEPTICAL OF IRAN, BUT
SEEKING CLEARER U.S. VISION

REFS: (A) STATE 55461, (B) STATE 57036, (C) STATE 54484,
(D) STATE 66050

¶1. (SBU) Since April post has regularly discussed the new UN Human Rights Council (refs A and B) and Iranian human rights violations (refs C and D) with Icelandic MFA Minister Counselor Nikulas Hannigan, who is both the International Institutions director and Middle East director in Iceland's small MFA. Hannigan said it would be difficult for Iceland to offer commitments concerning Icelandic intentions with respect to the Human Rights Council and related issues so long as the U.S. does not explicitly name the states "that systematically abuse human rights" against which we say we wish to campaign. POLOFF assured Hannigan that Iran would be one such and encouraged him to draw additional conclusions based on country human rights practices on which we have demarched him in the past.

¶2. (SBU) Hannigan referred POLOFF to Foreign Minister Geir Haarde's April 6 foreign policy speech to Iceland's parliament, in which Haarde contended that "states which systematically violate their human rights commitments, or are subject to sanctions by the Security Council as a result of human rights violations, should not be supported for a seat on the (Human Rights) Council." (Note: Haarde also said that the Council "did not entirely meet the expectations of the Icelandic government" and that "(l)asting peace and security will only be established through effective democracy and respect for human rights and international human rights legislation." End note.)

¶3. (SBU) Comment: Reykjavik would be highly unlikely to vote for Iranian membership on the Human Rights Council. FM Haarde clearly shares our antipathy for state violators of human rights with pretensions to serve in the world's most important new human rights institution. End comment.

KOSNETT